



How Parents Can Promote Career Exploration

Much has been discussed in recent years concerning the old African proverb: “It takes the whole village to raise a child.” In fact, Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton wrote a book about the need for everyone to get involved to ensure the success and well being of all our children. As parents and/or good citizens we can do more by getting involved in our schools and community by volunteering whenever possible. And, we can do more at home by implementing some of the following strategies:

- Listen and encourage your children to be curious about the world they live in. Take them to the zoo, library, museums, and multicultural events. If you live in a city, take them to a farm or ranch. If you live in a rural community, take them to the city to see how others live and take them on public transportation to show them how people get to work and home.
- Encourage friends and relatives to talk with your children about their careers—what they do, the work environment, and how they chose their occupation.
- Explore career options with your children, taking into consideration their likes, dislikes, talents, strengths, interests.
- Provide your children with various opportunities to learn computer skills. Go to the library where computers are available, or buy a home computer for the family. If you use a computer on the job, share with them how computers have made your work easier, faster, and more enjoyable.
- Talk to your children about a career as one goal of their education. Tell them it is okay not to know what they want to do when they grow up, but that it is not too early to think about their future.
- Watch television with your children and talk with them about the roles men and women have on the shows, and explain to them that the careers depicted are suitable for both boys and girls.
- Encourage your children to participate in school and after school activities that help them develop skills that can be applied later in the workplace.
- Encourage them to volunteer at church, hospitals, food kitchens, charity events, etc.
- Share your hobbies and interests with your children.
- Take your children to your place of employment and identify the various occupations within the business.
- Show an interest in their school and schoolwork.
- Assign house chores/jobs, avoiding gender stereotypes.
- Stress good work habits: attendance, appearance, and attitude.